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On the eve of their one-year anniversary, the five members of the MBTA's Fiscal Management and Control Board report that the "long-term rebuilding of the MBTA is underway." That's not a very sexy headline, but it's accurate.

The control board, one of the most fascinating state government experiments in a long time, came into being in the wake of the winter of 2015, which brought the T to its knees and highlighted just how dysfunctional the transit agency was. Yet the board, in an op-ed in the *Boston Globe*, said it quickly discovered "the T's challenges were even deeper and more disturbing than we had anticipated." They described the agency as "fiscally and operationally broken."

Over the last year, the five unpaid board members have met almost every week to push and prod change at the agency. Their biggest success has been making an incredibly insular organization recognize its problems and begin to address them.

The board goes about its job by asking staff to report on problems at the agency and then asking questions to illuminate the best next course of action. The board members -- **Joseph Aiello**, a partner at Meridiam Infrastructure; **Lisa Calise**, the chief financial officer at the Perkins School for the Blind; **Brian Lang**, president of Local 26, Boston's hotel and food service union; **Steve Poftak**, executive director of the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston at Harvard's Kennedy School; and **Monica Tibbits-Nutt**, executive director of the 128 Business Council -- are all very different.

Aiello, the chairman of the control board, is the most knowledgeable about transportation issues

because of his background, which includes a stint working at the T itself. Calise is the most hard-nosed of the group, particularly on financial matters. Lang pays close attention to union issues, but hasn't become an obstacle to privatization efforts. Poftak, who previously worked at the Pioneer Institute, is a guy who seems driven by data. And Tibbits-Nutt becomes most animated when talking technology.

The five board members seem to respect each other and work cooperatively. Right now, they seem focused on putting out fires, which spring up with amazing frequency. They haven't had many philosophical debates in public about the direction of the agency, but that may come as they begin to develop long-term strategy and governance for the agency.

Their biggest problem seems to be the thin bench of senior management talent at the agency. It's evident in the T's inability to spend all the capital funds at its disposal. It's evident in the agency's reliance on consultants to spearhead larger projects such as the Green Line Extension. And it's evident in the weekly presentations to the board, which tend to be handled by a very small group of executives.

The politics of transportation is also a minefield for the control board. As the five board members struggle to put the T on sound operational and financial footing, they are continuously buffeted by citizens, groups, and pols who want the T to do more and more when the agency is barely able to run and maintain what it has now.

South Coast Rail, a priority of the Baker administration and South Coast lawmakers, may be the most obvious example. The project's budget recently jumped from $2.23 billion to $3.4 billion, all for a line that would carry an estimated 4,750 riders a day. Rather than pull the plug on the project to Fall River and New Bedford, the board members kicked the can down the road by deciding to pursue an alternative route that possibly could be done for far less money.

The control board identified most of the T's problems in its first year of operation. Now it's time to fix them. As the board members say in their op-ed, "our greatest challenges lie ahead."

BRUCE MOHL

BEACON HILL

Republican Rep. **Brad Jones Jr.** is an opponent of new natural gas pipelines, but what will he do now that he is in a position to actually do something about it? (*CommonWealth*) Meanwhile, a group calling itself **People over Pipelines** begins a five-day march to protest construction of a new pipeline. (*The Enterprise*)

Airbnb follows the Uber playbook up at the State House as lawmakers seem inclined to regulate these apps with a light touch. (*CommonWealth*)

Shirley Leung says a tax on Airbnb rentals that would fund an increase in the earned income tax credit for low-income workers is the kind of levy even an anti-tax governor should get behind. (*Boston Globe*) A *Herald* editorial says the state should figure out a way to fund an EITC boost without resorting to a new tax.

The Massachusetts House passes the **pay equity bill**. (Masslive)

The House and Senate are at odds over legislation that would reform the use of non-compete clauses by businesses. (*Boston Globe*)

A *Telegram & Gazette* editorial laments the cut in state tourism funding, but offers as a partial solution the consolidation of tourism councils across the state. Do we really need five councils west of Worcester County, the newspaper asks.

MUNICIPAL MATTERS

Lawrence's former assessor sues the city, claiming Mayor **Daniel Rivera** fired her without giving her the chance to appeal the decision to the City Council. A previous lawsuit filed on similar grounds by the city's former comptroller was successful. (*Eagle-Tribune*)

A *Lowell Sun* editorial praises the city for launching a public awareness campaign to convince people not to give money to **panhandlers**, which the newspaper calls a "parasitic practice." *CommonWealth* explains why Lowell and other Gateway Cities are so concerned about begging.

As Sabic Innovative Plastics leaves **Pittsfield** for Texas, many workers are leaving as well, creating vacancies in town governments across the area. (*Berkshire Eagle*)

A 15-year-old girl at the **Academy of Notre Dame** in Tyngsboro will face charges for sending racist messages to black students and making it appear they came from a classmate. (*Lowell Sun*)

Fighting an industrial fire in **Peabody** over several days has depleted the city's water supply. (*Salem News*)

Southborough selectmen have refused to sign a letter circulated by US Rep. **Katherine Clark** calling on House Speaker **Paul Ryan** to allow a vote on gun control measures. (*MetroWest Daily News*)

The Boston Redevelopment Authority approved an 800-unit tower in **Roxbury** that will be privately-managed dorms for **Northeastern University**. (*Boston Herald*)

Boston may have obtained too good of a deal from the Earl of Sandwich as the chain is now struggling financially with its restaurant on **Boston Common**. (*CommonWealth*)

Springfield Mayor **Domenic Sarno** proposes spending $500,000 to buy the troubled Dunbar Community Center. (Masslive)

WASHINGTON/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

At least 84 men, women, and children were killed in an apparent terrorist attack in **Nice, France**, when a truck loaded with weapons and explosives plowed into a crowd during a Bastille Day celebration and drove for nearly a mile crushing spectators. (*New York Times*)

ELECTIONS

Donald Trump has reportedly chosen Indiana Gov. **Mike Pence** as his running mate but has delayed his planned announcement because of the terrorist attack in France. (*New York Times*)

Despite being caught in a downpour, Gov. **Charlie Baker** makes the case for a ballot question that would expand the number of charter schools in the state. (State House News)

Baker vetoed $1.2 million earmarked for early-voting efforts, drawing the ire of Secretary of State **William Galvin**, legislative leaders, and voting-rights advocates. An override looks very likely. (*Boston Globe*)

Ex-Scott Brown campaign manager **Colin Reed** pens a screed against **Hillary Clinton** and **Martha Coakley** dressed up as an analysis of why Coakley went on the record in a recent article slamming US Attorney **Carmen Ortiz**. (He says she's angling to be named to Ortiz's post under a Clinton administration.) (*Boston Herald*)

BUSINESS/ECONOMY

The demand for **organic products** is so high that some major food brands such as General Mills and Kellogg are underwriting farmers for the high cost of converting their fields to organic production. (*New York Times*)

EDUCATION

Can **Harvard University** build the next Kendall Square in Allston? (*CommonWealth*)

The Fall River School Committee has denied charges from an Open Meeting Law violation complaint filed by former school superintendent **Meg Mayo-Brown** last month over a vote by the committee to freeze administrative appointments and block her authority to hire people in her final days. (*Herald News*)

Hundreds of graduates of **Phillips Exeter** have signed a petition saying they'll withhold donations to the tony prep school until it shows it has reformed its ways of handling sexual abuse allegations. (*Boston Globe*)

UMass trustees approve a 5.5 percent increase in tuition for the coming year. (*Telegram & Gazette*)

HEALTH/HEALTH CARE

The state **Health Connector** will eliminate copays and all out-of-pocket costs for addiction treatment services. (*Boston Globe*)

TRANSPORTATION

The Legislature rejects Gov. **Charlie Baker's** more flexible T fare amendment. (State House News)

Lt. Gov. **Karyn Politio** tells a Dartmouth audience that the administration remains committed to South Coast Rail and is hopeful about an alternative route using the Middleboro commuter rail line. (*Standard-Times*)

Peter Pan Bus Lines is in negotiations to move into Springfield Union Station's new intermodal transportation center. (Masslive)

A Superior Court judge has tossed a lawsuit seeking to prevent **Marshfield Airport** from using an extended runway that was completed two years ago. (*Patriot Ledger*)

ENERGY/ENVIRONMENT

Spectra Energy is eyeing Somerset to site two huge LNG storage tanks after opposition to a proposed site in Acushnet spurred the company to seek alternatives. Somerset officials are welcoming the plan as a way to offset revenue losses from the closing of the Brayton Point power plant. (*Herald News*)

Dennis Whyte of MIT tells **Edward M. Murphy** that fusion could be the next big thing. (*CommonWealth*)

Federal officials have given approval to a statewide conservation plan that allows off-road vehicles limited travel on beaches in Plymouth and Orleans in areas that **piping plovers** are nesting. (*Cape Cod Times*)

Weymouth foes of a proposed natural gas compressor station at Fore River say they will continue to fight the project after the state denied a request for an environmental review for two pipeline projects opponents say were split up to avoid such a review. (*Patriot Ledger*)

CRIMINAL JUSTICE/COURTS

The Supreme Judicial Court orders a new trial for a Haverhill man found guilty of shaking his girlfriend's baby and causing her permanent brain damage. The court held that the defendant's legal team failed to present to the jury alternative theories on **shaken baby syndrome**. (*Eagle-Tribune*)

Bostonians overall have a positive view of the city's police department, but blacks have higher levels of mistrust, according to a new survey by the **MassINC Polling Group**. (*Boston Globe*)

A suspended **state trooper** facing multiple charges, including drunken driving and carrying a firearm while intoxicated, will stand trial for the 2013 fatal crash that killed a Carver woman and her daughter. (*The Enterprise*)

MEDIA

Donald Trump has Fox News on speed dial lately. (CNN)

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